

**Mr. SCOTT of Virginia:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Concurrent Resolution 261, introduced by my friend and colleague from Virginia's Second Congressional District, Congresswoman *Thelma Drake*, to commemorate the centennial anniversary of the sailing of the Navy's ``Great White Fleet" from Hampton Roads, Virginia.

On December 16, 1907, President Theodore Roosevelt dispatched sixteen new battleships at the 1907 Jamestown Exposition on a global deployment to show the world that the United States had emerged as a global naval power. These sixteen ships were painted white, with gilded scrollwork on their bows, and became known as the ``Great White Fleet."

Made up of four squadrons of four battleships each and manned by 14,000 sailors, the ships sailed 43,000 miles and made 20 port calls on six continents in 14 months. The fleet helped shore up American diplomatic efforts and friendships around the world, proving the success of pragmatic diplomatic policy. The fleet was greeted enthusiastically in nearly every port, where people in the thousands turned out to see America's new fleet. The fleet also responded to one of the worst earthquakes in European history by diverting to Sicily to offer humanitarian aid to the people of Italy.

On February 22, 1909, President Roosevelt returned to Hampton Roads, Virginia to witness the triumphant return of the ``Great White Fleet." President Roosevelt saw the fleet's successful global voyage as one of his administration's major accomplishments by enhancing the role of the United States in international affairs. Few can deny the historical importance of President Roosevelt's decision to deploy the ``Great White Fleet" around the world.

Seven of the 16 great battleships that constituted the ``Great White Fleet" were

built in my hometown of Newport News, Virginia at Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company, today known as Northrop Grumman Newport News. Although the ``Great White Fleet" demonstrated that America was an emerging seapower, the success of the ``Great White Fleet" made Newport News and the Hampton Roads area a powerhouse for shipbuilding. One hundred years later, Northrop Grumman Newport News is still leading the way in the shipbuilding industry by building some of the most powerful and advanced ships for the United States Navy. Northrop Grumman Newport News has already begun work on the U.S.S. *Gerald Ford*, the newest and most advanced generation of air craft carrier, to lead the U.S. Navy into the 21st century.

Mr. Speaker, the voyage of the ``Great White Fleet" has proven to be a pivotal event in the history of this great Nation. While impacting the entire United States, the impression of the ``Great White Fleet" can be most felt in Hampton Roads, Virginia. In addition to being home to one of the Nation's most important shipbuilding facilities at Newport News, the world's largest naval base is located just across the Hampton Roads in Norfolk, Virginia. The citizens of Hampton Roads should feel very proud about the role of our region in one of the most important nautical voyages in American history. I urge my colleagues to support this important concurrent resolution.